

Committee on Resources

Witness Testimony

Testimony on HR 434
DAVID N. SANCHEZ
Mayor of Village of Jemez Springs
Before the
House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
September 25, 1997

It is the ultimate honor to appear before you today on behalf of one of the smallest communities to ever win the All America City Award, Jemez Springs, New Mexico.

Up until 1993 Jemez Springs was an obscure little Village snuggled away in the Santa Fe National Forest in some of the most beautiful forest land in the United States.

Then the National Recreation Area(NRA) was created and this little community was suddenly on the map with over I million tourists coming through annually.

A community of 460 residents suddenly has big city problems when on any given weekend over 50,000 tourists will pass through causing a tremendous strain on the local residents, the infrastructure, law enforcement and especially the volunteer fire department and emergency medical technicians(EMT's).

The Jemez Springs Volunteer Fire Department and EMT's cover a large area of the county since Jemez Springs is the only incorporated municipality in the NRA. Over 90% of the emergency responses handled by Jemez Springs are outside the Village limits. The nearest county service is over 60 miles away and in emergency situations, time is of essence.

The 1996 New Mexico legislature appropriated funds for the Village of Jemez Springs to construct a substation for the fire department to provide room for additional water tankers (water is commodity when fighting fires) and emergency vehicles and equipment.

The Village attempted to purchase the land but land prices are out of reach and attempts to lease or share land with various entities were unsuccessful.

We called on then Representative Bill Richardson in obtaining a couple of acres of Forest Service land within the Village to house our substation. Representative Bill Richardson responded with his bill which is now H.R. 434 before you.

Representative Bill Redmond now represents Northern New Mexico since Representative Richardson is now Ambassador Richardson.

The two acres of Forest Service land we are requesting is in a strategic location in the Village of Jemez Springs with enough room for the substation and provide ample turnout room.

The land will be used only for a substation. The substation would be hidden from view so as to not disturb the tranquil ambiance of the Village and is near a natural water source where a dry hydrant would be used to refill the pumper trucks and tankers.

Having a substation in Jemez Springs would increase our ability to respond quickly and efficiently with more water and equipment.

This will certainly benefit the local residents, the tourists and the local ranger station as we would provide another source for water and manpower should the Forest Service need us.

The local Forest Service Rangers, Mr. John Peterson, Mr. Dennis Trujillo and Regional Forester, Charles Cartwright have been extremely helpful in our cause.

On behalf of the Village of Jemez Springs I would Thank You in advance for your most serious consideration of our request which would benefit many entities.

Respectfully,
David N. Sanchez, Mayor
VILLAGE OF JEMEZ SPRINGS

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